THE Work and Mercy OF GOD Conduceth to his PRAISE;

Or a Demonstration of the Visitation of Gods Love to my Soul in the dayes of my Youth;

BEING

A Testimony of the Light of Christ in the Conscience, which discovereth and judgeth Sin; and also (if loved and obeyed) saveth from Sin, and redeemeth the Soul unto God.

WITH

- *A word to those that are young in years, for them to mind their Creator in the dayes of their Youth.*
- *A Faithful Warning to all People that are living in wickedness, for them to return to the Lord (by true and unfained repentance) with speed, before the Beesom of Gods wrath sweep them away.*
- *An Invitation of Love to those that are seeking the Living God in the Dead Forms.*
- *A Lamentation over those that are apostatized from the Truth.*
- *A word to all those who in words profess Truth, but in life and works deny it.*
- *A word to those who are convinced of the Way of Truth, but still remain in the Worlds wayes, and continue in known disobedience.*
- *A Salutation of encouragement to those that are newly convinced of the Truth, and yeildeth obedience thereunto.*
- *A word of comfort and encouragement to the true Mourner in Sion.*
- *A general Salutation of Love to the Children of Light.*

By a Friend to all People, and one that desires the good of all Souls, and is a Lover of all that loveth Truth, and a Companion to all that walks therein, and a Sufferer for the Truth in *Edmonds-Bury* Common Goal. *William Bennitt.*

Printed in the Year, 1669.

THE
Works and Mercy
OF
PRAISE:

A Declaration of the Vitrarie of God's
love to my Soul in the dayes of my Youth;

BEING
A Testimony of the Light of Christ in the Conscience,
which discovereth and judgeth Sin; and also (if loved
and obeyed) saveth from Sin, and redeemeth the Soul
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Printed in the Year, 1689.

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A Demonstration of the Visitation of Gods Love to my Soul in the dayes of my Youth, &c.

Published in bowels of pity and love to all those that have desires after the Way of Truth, and are yet seeking it abroad in their imaginations, and are mourning and groaning under the burthen and weight of sin; hoping and desiring (that if the Lord will) such may meet with some incouragement and direction hereby, for them to turn their minds in to the Light of Christ in themselves, and in it to believe, and wait for power over, and freedom from sin, that true lasting peace in God they may come to witness, to the true & full satisfaction of their Souls.

All things that are reproved, are made manifest by the Light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is Light, &c. That which may be known of God is manifested in them, &c. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed thereunto according to thy Word; thy Word I have hid in my heart, &c. Eph. 5. 13, &c. Rom. 1. 19. Psalm 119. 9, 11.

WHen I was but young in years, the Lord God (of Light, Life and Power, of tender Love, of infinite Compassion and everlasting bowels of Mercy) was pleased then (in some measure) to visit me by or with his pure Light in my own Conscience, which many a time did check and reprove me for my sins, and brought my evil doings to my remembrance, and judged me in my own heart for evil,

ard ſometimes brought trouble upon my mind for my ſins, but I was not then ſenſible that it was the Light of Chriſt Jeſus (*who is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the World*) which then in my own Conſcience did check, reprove, and judge me for evil, and ſometimes broke my falſe eaſe and reſt in ſin; inſomuch, as I could not go on in ſin, wildneſs and vanity, without being ſomewhat troubled, terrified, and reproved for my ſin at one time or other; though when I was among idle children that were void of the fear of God, I ran into ſin and wickedneſs with them; and for the preſent time, I acted in ſin with great delight and joy; but when I came to be ſtill, quiet, and alone in the fields, or elſewhere; then would the pure Witneſs of God ariſe in me with its reproofs, and ſet my ſins in order before me, and brought my evil doings to my remembrance which I had acted out of the pure fear of the Lord God, and then trouble for a time took hold on me, and ſin became my burthen; but I ſoon got from under that burthen at eaſe and liberty again, and ran into ſin and vanity again; and thus year after year I went on in rebellion againſt the Witneſs of God in my own Conſcience, taking delight and pleaſure in thoſe things I knew was evil; yet the Lord God (whoſe tender bowels of pity and compaſſion did then in Mercy hover over me for good to me in that day) did ſometimes ſtop me from ſpeaking and acting that evil I intended to ſpeak or do, and preſerved me out of many groſs evils, which many others were addicted unto, and overcome with. And in thoſe dayes when I was alone in the Fields I cried and prayed unto the Lord; and deſires were ſtirring in me after the knowledge of him, his Way and Truth; but I prayed to a God I knew not; I imagined a God afar off, and did not then know that it was the Lord that did ſearch my heart, and diſcover unto me my thoughts, and judged me for ſin; I then knew not that that was the Light, Way and Truth of God in my own heart, which ſometimes begot deſires in me to know the Truth, and to walk therein; but my mind was abroad, (as it is with many at this day, who have deſires after Truth and Righteouſneſs, but are ſeeking abroad in Carnal Ordinances, Forms, Likeneſſes, beggerly Elements, Rudiments of the World, Ceremonies and Traditions of men) and knew not that that in me was Truth which ſometimes ſtopt me from lying and ſwearing; and when I knowingly told a

lye,

lye, it would accuſe me, when no man could accuſe me for it: and as I grew up into years, for I may truly ſay, there was ſomething ſtirring in me (at times) after the Lord ever ſince I was ſix or ſeven years of age; and when I came to be about fourteen years old, and came to be a Prentize, and to be in outward thraldom and bondage, it pleaſed the Lord, the compaſſionate God of infinite loving-kindneſs to viſit me more then formerly, by his pure Light and Spirit, which increaſed in ſtriving with me daily, that I ſcarce knowingly committed any evil, but the Light would ſoon judge me for it; yea, the Lord God with his pure Light and Gift did purſue me hard, and followed me cloſe, calling to me in my heart, with his ſtill voice, to come out of ſin, out of evil words and works; but I (like *Samuel*, when he was a Child) knew not that it was the Lord that did call; for he was (though neer me) as a Stranger to me, and I knew not his voice, but went aſtray as a wandering Sheep, yet having deſires to know the way to the Fold, and to know where the Lord feedeth his Flock, and cauſeth them to lie down in peace, quietneſs, and reſt, where none can make them afraid; for indeed it was reſt my Soul wanted, and true peace in God my Soul many a time longed for, and panted after; for, oh, I was oftentimes wounded, wounded, wounded becauſe of ſin, and for want of the enjoyment of the Love and Peace of God, *I* went many a time bowed down in ſpirit day after day with an aking Mind, grieved Soul, and wounded Conſciences, with my eyes full of tears, and my heart full of ſighing; thinking in my heart there was few (if any) in my ſtate and condition; ſometimes wiſhing, and ſaying in my heart, *Oh, that I were in a deſart ſollitary place outwardly* (for ſo was my condition inwardly) *where no man inhabits, where I might have mourned and wept out my fill, and have poured out my tears unto the tender God of tender bowels of mercy, and have ſpread my complaints before him whom my Soul did then ſometimes, in meaſure, long, thirſt and pant after, even as the Hart panteth after the water Brooks*: And many a time I did get into a ſollitary place to eaſe my heart a little, in pouring out my tears and complaints to the Lord; for in thoſe dayes many were my prayers and tears, for great was the burthen and load which I oftentimes went under day after day, which made me cry night and day to the Lord for peace and reſt; yet I then not knowing that it was the Light of Chriſt in my Conſcience

that

that did break my reſt and peace in ſin; neither knew it to be a ſtay to the mind, and a bridle to my tongue; I many a time got into a falſe eaſe and liberty in idleneſs and widlneſs of youth, but it was broke again, and ſorrow and trouble would take hold on my mind, and true deſires would again be renewed in me after the Lord, and breathing and thirſting after Righteouſneſs; and oh, my heart and ſoul was many a time made tender and ſoft; and oh, pity, pity and tender bowels of compaſſion was in me towards any that I thought was in my condition, and a tender love was ſecretly hid in my heart towards thoſe that I then thought were the people of God; and I can truly ſay, my bowels and heart is open ſtill, and often times pity, love, compaſſion and tenderneſs iſſues forth in me towards thoſe that now are in that condition I then was in; oh, my ſoul, my ſoul cannot but in ſome meaſure ſimpathize with them, and in ſpirit bear a part of their burthens and ſorrows in my boſom, and that not without ſome ſecret crys in my heart unto the tender God of bowels of pity on their behalfs; and partly for their ſakes is this publiſhed, hoping (that if the Lord will) it may be of ſervice unto ſome of them, and if the Lord order it ſo to be to them, or any, then will my end herein be anſwered thereby.

And In thoſe dayes I frequented the Meetings of the People called *Independants*; (*viz.*) *Will. Bredges* Congregation in great *Yarmouth*, whom I then thought were the People of God, and yet I then ſaw that many of their lives and converſations, even ſome of the chief of them were not conſiſtant with what they profeſſed in words; and when I have been amongſt them in the time of their ſinging Pſalms, the pure Witneſs of God in my own heart hath (as it were) ſtopped my mouth, that I could not ſing with them; but my heart in the time of their ſinging was broken into tenderneſs, and many were the tears of my eyes; and verily my outward man or earthen veſſel hath quaked and trembled (this was before I was by Scorners called a Quaker, or had ſeen any of thoſe People) and ſhaken like a leaf that is ſhaken with the wind (which might have been a ſign of that ſhaking which ſince the Lord hath ſuffered to come upon them, which hath almoſt ſhattered and ſcattered them, who will ſhake all ſandy Foundations, and blaſt all Profeſſions that are out of the Light and power of God) by the working of the Light and Power of God in my heart, though I then knew not

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that it was the Power of God that brought such a trembling upon me, and that did in some measure let me see, that it was not then a time of singing for me; for I was then in a strange Land, in the Land of Captivity, and could not sing the Songs of *Sion*, which *I* may truly say (not in the least enmity towards the people; for my soul beareth love and good will towards all men, and desire to tender and own the least true appearance of God in any) they were ignorant of, who were then singing what others had preseribed and made ready for them; I then wanted the enjoyment of the Love, Joy, Peace, and sweet Presence of God, which maketh glad the hearts of the Righteous, and causeth the lowly, meek and upright to sing (in the Spirit with understanding) for joy; not that Song or Songs, or Psalms which men have invented by their humane wisdom; (from which wisdom the Mysteries of Gods Kingdom is obscured and concealed) but the new and living Song, which the dead cannot sing, but the living that are raised and redeemed out of, and from the Earth, and from amongst men, even the ransomed of the Lord, that are returned from *Babylon* unto Mount *Sion*, whereon they stand with the Lamb, whom they have followed through many tribulations; and hath not loved their lives unto death; and hath washed their Garments, and made them white in his Blood; in and by whom they are become Virgins; and hath cast off all old Lovers, and are not defiled with the woman *Jezebel*; but through the Lamb have gotten victory over the Whore, Beast and false Prophet, and in the Heavenly Dominion of the Lamb (by whom they are made more then Conquerors) do they stand an the Sea of Glass mingled with Fire, with the Harps of God, and can sing a new Song of praise and thanksgiving *unto him that was dead, but is alive, and lives for evermore.*

And in all the times of my trouble of mind, and travel of spirit I never made known how it was with me, nor declared my condition to any Creature, though never so intimate with them, but kept it secret in my heart, pouring out my complaints to God, but not unto any man; yet I could gladly have had some to have known how it was with me, but I was straitned in my self, and kept it in obscurity; and in those dayes I knew not what it was that wrought and strove with me, and did so frequently judge and

reprove

reprove me for sin, and gave me power over many evils which others were overcome withal, and raised strong desires in me after the Lord, and discovered unto me the thoughts of my heart; I say, I knew not then what it was, I was then not sensible that it was the Light of Christ Jesus, or a measure of the Spirit of Truth, neither did I then know I should have taken heed thereinto, *as unto a Light shining in a dark place, until the day had more and more dawned, and until Christ the Day-Star had arisen in my heart* over all my Enemies; but my mind was still gazing abroad, and imagining a God afar off, and he was very nigh me, but I knew him not, but was hunting abroad in my imaginations for that which was within me; the *Pearl of great price was hid in my heart*, but *I* knew it not; the *Kingdom of God was at hand*, but I was gazing for it abroad, whilst it (in measure) was working in my heart, like *Leaven hid in three measures of Meal, &c.* the *Door into the Fold*, the *Entrance into Rest was within*, but I was seeking it abroad; my *Saviour was nigh*, but I imagined him *afar off*, and knew him not *nigh*; neither did any man in those days direct my mind *unto the Light and Gift of Christ in my own heart*: and as for the Teachers of the People, even they in the highest profession of God in words, were ready (they being soignorant and unsensible of the Gift of God in themselves) to speak blasphemy of the pure spiritual Light of Christ within (as many professors do at this day; yet notwithstanding make a large profession and confession of Christ in words, though in works deny him) and to say, that which troubles a man for his sins is a temptation of Satan, and thereby instead of directing the mind to the Light, draw away the mind more from the Light, and such are blind, and are under the wo, *that calls light darkness, good evil*, and are in that spirit they were, who (though great Professors) said concerning Christ, *He is mad, and hath a Devil, why hear you him*; but as some then replyed, and said, *Are these the works of him that hath a Devil? Can the Devil open the eyes of the Blind?* So I may say, Is it the Devils work to discover Sin, and judge, condemn, and trouble a man (in the unconverted state) for sin? or is it not his work to lull people asleep in sin, and to cry peace to them in their iniquities, and to keep them satisfied with a profession of God, without the possession of a holy undefiled life? Is it his work to destroy his own Kingdom, which is sin? surely, no; that is only and alone

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the Work of Christ, *the Light of the World, made manifest within to destroy the Devil and his works*; he brings trouble upon the Transgressor, and ministers judgement against the Evil-doer; he kindles a fire in the earthly heart, and raiseth trouble, wars, and great tribulation within, before he be known to be the Prince of Peace, the Sabboth, the everlasting Rest for the Soul. And now I know infallibly that that which in those days did bring trouble upon me for my sins, and checked and judged for evil, and begat good desires in me after the Lord, was the pure Witness of God, the manifestation of his Spirit, the Light of his Son Christ Jesus, a measure of his Free Grace and Truth in my own heart; and if ten thousand should assert or affirm the contrary, I know their testimony will be a Lye. But, oh, alas for me, after all this long visitation of the Love, Goodness, and Mercy of the Lord to my Soul, and after all this trouble of mind, travel of spirit, desiring and seeking after the Lord, I got, oh, I got into a false ease in the fleshly nature, and into a wrong liberty and false security, (as it is with many professors at this day, who once were low, broken, and tender in heart, mourning under the load and burthen of sin, having sincere desires to serve God in holiness of life, who are now gotten into the form and likeness of that they then hungred and thirsted after, and are therewith satisfied, and feeding themselves with others words, and with knowledge without life, and so are gotten at ease in the pride fashions and vanity of the World, and are at liberty in the flesh, counting it their freedom to do those things that once was their burthen and bondage) and I became careless, and by disobedience I quenched the strivings of the Light of Christ in me; insomuch, as the burthen, trouble and sorrow which once lay heavy upon my mind; I felt little of, although the original and real cause which occasioned the burthen, sorrow and trouble (which was my sins) was not taken away, but augmented, and I through Rebellion had almost murthered the just and holy one in me, and had so grieved and wounded the Spirit of the Lord, that it had almost ceased striving with me, though at sometimes it would bring former things to my remembrance; and then some trouble and sorrow would seize upon me for a time, but I soon got over it again, and turned from the Grace into wantonness, and so forgot the Lord whom I had formerly desired and sought after; and my

heart ran a whoring after my old Lovers with my face turned back again to *Egypt* (the Land of Darkneſs, Wickedneſs, the Bondage houſe of Sin and Corruption) which before was partly turned toward *Canaan*, the Land of Light, Life and Reſt, and ſo ran into ſuch evils as I had formerly been kept out of by a ſecret power which I then knew not, and I grew wonton, careleſs and wicked, and my mind and heart taken off ſeeking the Lord, and run into, and after the vanity, pleaſures and idleneſs of the world, delighting much in Muſick and Dancing, Sporting and Gaming, and ſo made merry over the pure Witneſs of God, by ſinning and rebelling againſt it, and by rejecting its reproof and ſtrivings: Oh, oh the patience and long-ſuffering of the Lord was large towards me in that day, who long waited to be gracious to my Soul day after day, year after year, who in his juſtice might have cut me off in my ſins and rebellion, and even have made me an example of his wrath; but oh, his mercy, his mercy and long-ſuffering was exceeding large to me, which by my Soul is not to be forgotten; but in and by the Spirit of Truth (which brings former things to remembrance, and ſheweth things to come) am I to be kept in a living ſence and remembrance of the great mercy, long patience, long forbearance, and long-ſuffering of the Lord God of Compaſſion towards me, and in the ſence thereof he is worthy to be praiſed and honoured by my Soul, who would not that I ſhould periſh from his preſence for ever; for after all this the Lord, the tender God of tender bowels of pity and compaſſion was pleaſed to viſit my poor Soul again, even for his pure Seed ſake, which he had not forgotten; but he remembred the poor and the needy, the captive exile, to deliver him out of the hand of him that was too ſtrong for him, and to looſe him, that he might not wholly die in the pit, and periſh in the miry clay; and God's precious Truth, and pure Way of Righteouſneſs, and everlaſting Goſpel of Light, Life and Peace I heard preached and declared by his precious Servants (who were, and are by ſcoffing *Iſhmael's* Brood, in ſcorn called Quakers, whom I now own in the Lord) and the pure Witneſs of God in my own heart bore teſtimony to the Truth declared by them; but long it was after I was in ſome meaſure convinced of the Truth, before I freely gave up my heart to obey the truth; but the Lord in time did overcome my heart by the power of his Love, his inſpeak-

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able Love, and made me willing to resign up my heart in obedience to him and to his Truth, and to bow down to the Yoak, and to take up the daily Cross, which I learned by loving and taking heed to the Light, and to dispise the shame, and to follow the Lord in that way (*viz.* the Light which before had judged me for sin begat desires in me to know the Way) which I knew not while my mind was abroad, and knew not the Lord nigh, who now teacheth and guideth me by his Light and Spirit in the way of Truth and Righteousness, wherein I have found peace, rest and true satisfaction for my soul, and witness my Teacher nigh, though it hath been my portion, with many other Brethren, sometimes to eat the bread of Adversity, and to drink the water of Affliction, yet my Teacher and Comforter can none remove from me; but he is and hath been with me in the Prison-house, and in the Low Dungeon; so that which now keeps me in peace and unity with the Lord, and in fellowship with his people; the same thing, (and not an other) was it that did formerly check, reprove, and judge me for evil, and brought trouble upon me for my sins, and that raised desires in me after the Lord, as I have explicated in the fore-going lines; though I deny not but that I have now a greater measure of Light and Grace then I had then; yet the Light (in quality and nature) is the same; for although the Light or Seed of the Kingdom (which consisteth of Joy, Peace and Righteousness in the Holy Ghost) be in the unbeliever and unconverted, even as the least of all other Seeds, yet nevertheless where or in whomsoever it be received in the Faith, Love and Obedience of it, in such it grows and increases until it becomes the greatest in them, and under its shadow they come to sit with great delight, and its fruit becomes sweet to their taste; and as a little Leaven in three measures of meal, it worketh and operateth in the heart and minds of those that believe in the Light, until it hath wrought out the old leaven of malice, sin and corruption, and leavened the heart and soul into its own nature, frame and quality; so the same Light which did condemn me for sin when I was in disobedience to it, the same hath and doth save me from sin, and now justifies me as I am kept in the Faith and Obedience of it, and now it ministers peace and rest unto me, and before it ministred trouble and condemnation: So this I assert and affirm experimentally for an unerrable invincible truth, (against

all the Oppoſers, Gainſayers, Fighters, and Undervalluers of the Light) *viz.* that the Light of Chriſt (who is the true Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the World) even in the Conſcience of that man or woman that is in unbelief, and in the unconverted ſtate, is one in nature and quality with the Light in that man or woman that is in the belief of it, and converted by it; and the Light of Chriſt in the Conſcience of the Drunkard and Swearer, that doth check, judge and reprove him for his ſins, if it be believed in, loved and obeyed, is able to ſave him from his ſins; but that man or woman that loveth evil and hateth the Light, and will not come to the Light, but reject it, ſuch do not feel nor witneſs the ſaving healing vertue, and reſtoring, redeeming power of the Light, but is only unto them a Judge and Condemner; but they that receive it in the love and belief thereof, ſuch in through and by the Light receive power to become the ſons of God, and joynt Heirs with Chriſt, of the Kingdom of God which endureth for ever.

So bleſſed, bleſſed be the Lord my tender God who is worthy, worthy to be praiſed, praiſed by my ſoul in the ſence of his Love, Goodneſs and Grace, whoſe Mercy hath been, and is wonderfull towards me, unto whom be honour, glory, praiſe, thankſgiving and obedience for evermore.

W. B.

And my Soul having obtained mercy of the Lord, and having taſted of his goodneſs and graciouſneſs, and experienced his tender fatherly dealings with and towards my Soul, my heart is opened with love and good will to all people, deſiring their good and eternal welfare in God.

To thoſe that are young in years, &c.

Mind thy Creator in the dayes of thy Youth, before the evil day come &c. Eccleſ. 12. 1, &c.

AND you who are yet young and tender in years, mind the Light of Chriſt in your Conſciences which checketh and reproveth

proveth for evil, and idle words and works, and it will learn you (if you love it) to fear and mind the Creator in the dayes of your Youth, before the evil dayes come, and the years when ye shall say, we have no pleasure in them: Oh, say not any of you, we are young, and have many years yet to spend, wherefore we will take the pleasure and delights of our youth, and seek the Lord afterward, and repent when we are old, &c. but remember the Lord God your Maker giveth unto you life, breath and being, and how soon he may cut the threed of your lives, and take you away from all your delights and vanity you know not; for many he taketh away in their Youth: wherefore trifle not away your precious time in sin and vanity, in vain sports and gamings, or any wickedness, lest your hearts come to be hardened in ungodliness, and you grow old in Iniquity, and when it is too late you diligently seek repentance, but you find it not; wherefore take warning, and mind those things in time before it be too late, that concern the eternal peace, rest, and happiness of your immortal Souls, and first seek the Kingdom of God rather then the riches, glory and honour of this world, which is all passing away, and will not help in the day of calamity and hour of distress and misery which will overtake the wicked, and all those that forget God, as a Thief in the night; therefore mind and fear the Lord your Maker, and take heed unto the Light in all your Consciences, which is pure and holy, and hath no unity with any evil thought, word or work, and love and believe in the Light, that you may become children of the Light; if you love the Light it will save you from your sins, and redeem you from a vain conversation, and learn you to take up a daily cross to your own wills, desires, lusts and affections, and to yoke down the vain, wild, wanton, corrupt nature, that defileth and polluteth your hearts and minds, lives and conversations; and so you will come to be changed and born again of the Seed incorruptible, of the word of God which is nigh in the heart to be obeyed and done; but if you delight in evil-doing; and hate the Light of Christ in your own Consciences which judgeth you for sin, and will not come to the Light, but live and abide in Darkness, and will not receive Gods Counsel and Warnings, nor hearken unto his Reproofs, nor have none of his Wayes, but will follow your own ways, wils and works, and fulfil the lusts and desires of your own hearts, and

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vain devices and imaginations of your own minds, and will not that the Light ſhould rule over you, to govern you in the pure fear of the Lord, and to lead you into holineſs of life, to guide you into the Way of Truth and Righteouſneſs, then will the Light be your condemnation, and leave you without excuſe when the Lord renders unto you according to your works, and *the wages of ſin is death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jeſus Chriſt*: Therefore, dear people, love it and imbrace it whilſt it is near you, even knocking at the door of your hearts; oh, hearken to it, and let it have place in your hearts, and refuſe not the Love and Mercy of the Lord tendered to you in the Light, nor harden not your hearts againſt the eternal good, peace and happineſs of your own ſouls, leſt the day of your viſitation paſs over, and the night of everlaſting darkneſs, ſorrow, miſery and calamity overtake you, and ſhut you up for ever.

To all People that live and delight in Wickedneſs.

The ſhew of their countenance doth witneſs againſt them, they declare their ſin like Sodom, *and hide it not. Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, &c. Ye have ſet at nought all my Counſel, and would have none of my Reproof, &c. I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh, &c. Behold the day cometh that ſhall burn as an Oven, and the Wicked, and they that do wickedly ſhall be as Stubble, &c. Now conſider this all you that forget God, leſt I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver,* Iſa. 3. 9. Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26. Mal. 4. 1. Pſal. 50. 22.

AND you, oh people, that are void of the pure fear of the Lord God, and hath given up your hearts to work wickedneſs with greedineſs, who ruſheth into ſin and ungodlineſs, as the Horſe ruſheth into the Battle, and drinking up iniquity as the Ox drinketh in water, taking pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs, and delighting in uncleanneſs, and wallowing in the mire of your own filthineſs and corruption, fulfilling the luſts of your unclean hearts, in Swearing, Lying,

Lying, Drunkenneſs, Whoredom, Pride, Couzening, Defrauding, and ſuch like Wickedneſs, whereby you grieve the Lord day after day, and wound, bruiſe, burthen and oppreſs his righteous Spirit, as a Cart that is oppreſſed with ſheaves: oh, repent, repent, and ceaſe from the evil of your doings, and leave off your wicked ways, leſt the Lord God tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Oh, tremble ye careleſs ones before the Lord Almighty, who can conſume you in a moment, and cut you off in the twinkling of an eye; oh, dread the Lord God, and fear his great and dreadfull Name, for the hour of his Judgement is come; oh, ſtand in aw of him who made the Heaven and the Earth, the Sea and Fountains of Waters, who giveth the Sun for a light by day, and the Ordinances of the Stars and Moon for a light by night, who divided the Sea when the waves thereof roar, who hath his way in the Whirlwind and in the Storm, and the Clouds are as the duſt of his feet, who meeteth out the Heavens with a ſpan, and meaſureth the waters of the Sea in the hollow of his hand, he comprehendeth the duſt of the Earth as in a meaſure, and weigheth the Mountains as in Scales, and the Hills as in a Ballance, in compararison of whom all Nations are but as a drop of the Bucket, and as the ſmall duſt of the Ballance. Oh, will you not fear the Lord, and dread his Majeſty, and tremble before his preſence, who is a terrible one to the Workers of Iniquity that will not repent; who cometh with Fire, and his Chariot, like a Whirlwind, to render his anger (againſt the wicked and ungodly) in fury, and his rebukes in flames of fire; for by his Fire, and by his Sword will he cut down the ſtrongeſt Oakes and talleſt Ceders, and will plead with all fleſh, and the ſlain of the Lord ſhall be many; wherefore repent, repent, and tremble, tremble before the Lord God ye Workers of Iniquity; for the day, the mighty terrible dreadfull day of the Lord God Almighty is come, and yet a coming, and wo, wo to the Briers and Thorns that cumber the Earth, for the day ſhall burn as an Oven, and the Wicked, and they that do wickedly, and will not take warning and repent, (but ſtill harden their hearts againſt the Lord, and againſt his precious Servants that warn you to repent, whoſe Souls mourn and lament over you in the ſence of the ſadneſs, wretchedneſs, miſerableneſs and deplorableneſs of your conditions) ſhall be as ſtubble, and the day will

burn

burn them up both root and branch; and the Fire will burn up the Briers and Thorns, and cleanse the Earth, that Truth, Righteousness, Justice, and Mercy, may spring and flourish therein: and the mouth of iniquity be stopt for ever: And the day of the Lord God will be upon every one that is proud, and lifted up against the Lord and his anointed; and the loftiness of the stoutest in heart against the Lord, shall be laid low, and the haughtiness of men shall be humbled, and the Lord God holy just and true shall be exalted in that day, when the Wicked shall flee to the Rocks, and hide themselves as in the Caves of the Earth, for the fear of the Lord, and the glory of his Majesty, when he cometh to shake terribly the Earth, and to overthrow the Seat of Wickedness for ever, and to punish the World for their sins, and the Wicked for their iniquity, and cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and to lay low the haughtiness of the terrible: Wherefore, oh People, prepare, prepare by true repentance, with speed, to meet the Lord in the way of his Judgements, before his dreadful Fury break forth against you, as devouring fire: oh, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and amendment of life; oh, why will you die and perish in your iniquities for ever? the Lord desireth not the destruction of a Sinner, but rather he should return in time, from his wickedness, and learn righteousness and live; yea, *Let the wicked forsake his wickedness, and the ungodly man his thoughts, and turn unto the Lord with his whole heart, and he will have mercy upon him; for with the Lord there is great mercy, and plentious redemption*, who also *is just in all his Wayes, and equal in all his doings, and righteous in all his Judgments, and he will not be mocked by any, such as people sow such must they reap, and the wages of sin is death*: Oh, how many hath been the warnings of the Lord to the People of this Nation time after time, year after year, line upon line, precept upon precept? but how few hath ponderously weighed them, received them, and layed them to heart? And how hath the Lord in part executed his righteous Judgments in and upon this poor Nation? and how few hath learned righteousness thereby? but the greatest part of thy Inhabitants, oh *England*, are still daily adding sin unto sin, and heaping of iniquity upon iniquity, and so fitting themselves for a day of slaughter: And truely, a great and sore Plague is come upon many people, even hardness, hardness of

heart

heart, so that indeed, neither the Warnings nor Woings, Mercies nor Judgments of the Lord will take impression on them, to move them to repentance; and in the sence of this my heart is grieved, and my Soul mourneth in secret, because of the hardness of their hearts, which doth signifie them to be as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Oh, how doth all manner of wickedness abound, and ungodliness appear with open face, and blush not at rebuke: oh, how doth Pride superabound, and peoples hearts so puffed up therewith, that many scarce know what to eat, drink, or put on; oh, the Fields are even white for the Harvest, Sinners grown ripe for Vengeance, Iniquity is coming to its full height, the Fats overflow with wickedness, oh, how are the Proud counted happy, and the Workers of Iniquity set up; but the Meek of the Earth are despised, and the humble and contrite ones are killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the Slaughter; and they that reproveth Sin in the Gate are hated and persecuted, and he that departeth from Iniquity, and learns Righteousness maketh himself a prey; Oh, the Lord hath seen it, and it displeaseth and grieveth him, because of the multitudes of the transgressions and abominations of the Sons of men, and violence and cruelty that filleth the Earth; but the Lord will arise as a man of War, and ease himself of his Enemies, and avenge himself of his Adversaries; for because Judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work, therefore the hearts of the Sons and Daughters of men are set in them to do wickedly; but what will be the end thereof?

Oh *England*, oh *England*, how often would the Lord in mercy have gathered thy Inhabitants unto himself, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but thou wouldest not? therefore hath the Lord in Judgment partly made thee desolate: Oh, thy great City, thy great City, whose abominations reached Heaven, and her Sins came up before the Most High? how hath the Lord God mighty in Power, and righteous in Judgment, layed her glory in the Dust, covered her dignity with Ashes, and marr'd her beauty with Burning! Oh, how hath he made of a City an Heap; of a defenced City, a Ruin; of a Palace of Strangers, to to become a ruinous Heap! And oh, how few of thy Inhabitants, oh *England*, hath weightily laid it to heart, or hath seriously, and diligently taken notice of the cause of the Destruction thereof!

the Lord could have destroyed the People with their Habitations; but the Lord in Mercy spared them, that his Mercy might move them to Repentance! Oh, *England*, how hath Judgment after Judgment been executed upon thine Inhabitants? how hath the Lord visited thee with Plague, Sword and Fire, yet their hearts are still stout against the Lord, and his People; their minds haughty, and they will not bow their hearts to the Lord, nor break off from their evil doings, and wicked ways; therefore is his hand stretched forth still, and they that will not take warning and repent must feel his heavy stroke. Oh, say not any of you in your hearts, tush, the Lord hath done his worst; oh, the Lord he hath begun, and he can make a full end, and who amongst you can stay his hand, or escape his stroke when he smites? or where can you hide your selves from the Lord? therefore bow, fear and tremble before him, and submit your selves, and meet him by true and unfeigned repentance, and that is the way for you to escape the stroke of his Fury.

The Lord is a God full of long-suffering, and full of patience and forbearance; and long woeth Sinners, and waiteth day after day to be gracious, even to the Rebellious; but his patient forbearing will come to an end towards those that will by no means repent and be reclaimed from the evil of their wayes, and against such his Anger and Wrath will break forth as Fire, and they like Stubble, ready dry, will be consumed therein: Therefore you that have not yet wholly sinned out the day of your visitation, prize, prize that little time you have, and make good use thereof, in diligently minding and seeking after those things that concerneth your eternal peace, before you go hence and be no more. Oh, dear people, every where, my love is to you, and pity and tender compassion is in my heart for you, and your good and welfare eternally I desire, especially you unto whom I am known in the flesh, even you my Neighbours and Countrymen whose residence is in *Kirtly Peakfield*, *Layestouff*, and those parts: oh, my Soul tenders your eternal happiness, and desires the Salvation of your Souls, yea, love and good will is in my heart towards you, and to all people; oh, that you your selves did tender, and seek after the Salvation of your Souls more then you do! dear People, your Souls are immortal, and must hereafter be in a sence and feeling of Joy, Peace

and

and Rest; or else of Sorrow, Misery and Torment, even to all Eternity; wherefore it concerns every particular one, to minde, above all other things, and seek after the eternal peace and happiness of your Souls in time, before it be too late; it is sin, wickedness, unbelief and hardness of heart that doth separate people from the Lord, and that draws down the wrath and curse of God upon them; wherefore people must first be separated and cleansed from that (to wit, sin) which separateth them from the Lord, and from his Love, Peace and Blessing, before they can witness their reconciliation unto God in his Son, and enjoy his Love, Peace, and Blessings. Oh, dear people, I beseech you, do not deceive your own Souls, by being satisfied with a talk of being saved and redeemed by Christ, &c. whilst you remain in your sins; for whom Christ saves, he saveth from their sins, not in their sins; and they that witness Christ to be their Redeemer, are redeemed from a vain conversation, and have their consciences purged from dead works, and their hearts cleansed and washed in his Blood (which is his Life and Light) from sin and corruption, that so they might serve him in newness and holiness of life: Therefore consider, be still, serious and ponderous in heart, and retire your minds inward to the pure Light of Christ in your own Consciences, that true and faithfull Witness of God, which keeps a Record of the deeds done in the Body, and according to his Record must every man be judged according its works, so take heed unto the Light, and it will shew you your conditions, and how it stands with your poor Souls to Godward; that, will deal plainly with you, and will not deceive you, though indeed, your Teachers (who preach for hire, and divine for money) hath, and do deceive you, by crying peace to you, and lulled you asleep in your sins, and hath (as it were) daubed you up with untempered morter, and (as it were) sewing pillows under your armsholes, so long as you put into their mouthes, and give them hire, and help to maintain their god, which is their Belly: but wo to such Teachers that feed with the Fat, and clothe with the Wool; and for filthy lucre and gain from their Quarters will cry peace unto the wicked, unto whom (while they remain in their wicked state) there is no true peace saith the Living God; oh, they are Blind Leaders of the Blind; and how many are faln into the Pit of Perdition, that hath

been lead by them! therefore, dear people, ceaſe from your Teachers, who hath not profitted you at all, but keep you ever learning, but never able to bring you to the knowledge of the Truth, which until you do come to know, freedom from the bondage of ſin and corruption, you cannot witneſs; therefore to the Light in all your Conſciences come, for that is truth, and love it, and obey it, and you will by it receive power over ſin, and be enabled to caſt off the Yoke of iniquity; and to take up the Yoke of Chriſt, and embrace that Croſs which crucifies unto the world and worldly things unto the luſt and wickedneſs thereof, and ſuch are true diſciples of Jeſus that learn of him who is meek and low in their hearts, and that do deny themſelves, and take up the daily croſs to their own wills, thoughts, words, works, deſire and affections, and follow him through many tribulations, in the narrow way of holineſs; for it is not he that calls Lord, Lord; but he that doth the will of God that inheriteth the Kingdom of God; not the Sayers, or Knowers of the Will of God are juſtified, but the Doers of the Will are juſtified; not they that onely confeſs (with the mouth, day after day, that they are miſerable Sinners, &c. (as both Prieſt and People do, and yet ſtill year after year remain the ſame, if not grow worſe) ſhall find mercy; but they that (not only confeſs) but forſake, and turn from the evil (in heart, life and converſation) unto that which is good, ſhall find mercy and forgiveneſs, and remiſſion of ſins. Oh, mind the good thing in you which is grieved and burthened with the evil, and turn in your minds to it, and it will let you ſee thoſe things that are reprovable: Drunkard turn in thy mind to the Light in thy own Conſcience, and it will ſhew thee, judge and reprove thee for thy Drunkenneſs; Swearer turn in to the Light, and it will judge thee for Swearing, for Lying, Pride, Envy, Malice, Reviling, Cheating, Defrauding, Covetouſneſs, Fornication; for, *All things that are reprovable are made manifeſt by the Light, and that which maketh manifeſt is Light*; thou that hateſt the Light, and loveſt thy evil deeds, and will not come to the Light, becauſe it will reprove thee, there thou haſt learned thy condemnation; *For this is the condemnation of the World, that Light is come into the World, and men love Darkneſs rather then the Light, becauſe their deeds are evil; but they that doth good loveth the Light, and bringeth their deeds*

deeds to the Light, to try them whether they be wrought in God; and such are justified by the Light; *So while you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may become Children of the Light*; so unto the Light (in all your Consciences) I am made manifest, and in true unfained love, and bowels of pity tenderness and compassion to your immortal Souls have I cleared my Conscience, in giving you warning to repent and turn from the evil of your own wayes unto the Lord, while you have time, before the door of mercy be shut against you for ever, and time unto you be no more.

From one that tenders the Eternal happiness and good of your Immortal Souls, a Sufferer in Bonds for the Testimony of a good Conscience,

William Bennet.

To those that are seeking the Living God in the Dead Forms.

Having a Form of godliness, but denying the Power thereof, from such turn away, &c. Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen, &c. Know you not your selves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except you be Reprobates. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Luke 14 5, 6. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

AND all dear People that are scattered among the many Sects, and Heaps, who have honest sincere desires and thirstings after the Lord; oh, love and compassion is in my heart towards you; and my Soul pities you; and the more, because you are seeking the Living God among the Dead Forms, Shadows, Carnal Ordinances, beggerly (in comparison of the Life of Truth) Elements and Rudiments of the World, but cannot there find true lasting peace, rest, comfort and satisfaction for the immortal Souls: oh, Christ is risen, he is not there, his appearance is now more hidden, more invisible, more inward; therefore stay not in Shadows, rest not in the likeness, without Life; pitch not your Tent in the Form,

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without the Power; Come, come away, you thirsty ones, from the Wells of mans digging, which can hold no Water that will rightly and kindly satisfie your thirsty Souls, and wait to know the Spring opened in your own hearts, which comes from Christ the Fountain of Living water, and drink thereof and be satisfied, and go no more forth to the broken Cisterns; but wait within, in the Light for the Springs of Life to refresh your thirsty Souls: Oh, come out of the Shadows to the Substance, *Christ* (the Light) *in you, except you be Reprobates*: oh, the Spirit and the Bride says come, and he that drinketh, saith come; and let him that is athirst come and drink of the Water of Life freely; why do you spend your time for that which is not Bread, and your labour for that which doth not truly satisfie your Souls: oh, feed no longer upon the husks, upon words without Life, upon knowledge without Power; for that will puff you up in your own eyes, and elevate you in your own conceits, and shut you out from the Tree of Life; and though you may seem to grow rich, and increase with goods, and want nothing; yet when your eyes come to be opened, you will see your selves poor, blind and naked; for he that covereth himself with a covering of words and knowledge, and a Profession without Life, his covering is not the Fine Linnen, white and clean, which the Wise Virgins that follow the Lamb are cloathed with, who have Oyl in their Vessels, the Light, Life and Substance in themselves; but they that only gets words and knowledge into the comprehension, and grow rich in the brain, and have their Religion in their head, and know not the pure and undefiled Religion in the heart, such are foolish Virgins, that have oyl only in their Lamps, and though such may blaze, and give a seeming great light in words, yet such one day will want oyl, and their lights will go out; the Lord will dry up all standing waters that hath no Spring; he will blast all Professions out of the Light, all Gatherings out of the Name and Power of God, the Lord will scatter; therefore come away (from among them) you unsatisfied and thirsty ones, whose Souls pant after the Lord, and are weary of the Husks, and hunger after the Substance, the Living Bread from Heaven; turn your minds in to the Light in your selves, wait to know Bread in your own Houses, Christ in you, the Bread of Life, which the Living Soul feeds on, and lives by,

that

that you may know the fresh and green Pasture, and with us feed thereon, and drink of the still Waters, and rest with us in (in the Light) the Fold; that so we may all know and have one Shepherd, and be all of one Sheepfold.

To those that are Backslided from the Truth.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fain, and repent, and do thy first works, &c. Return, oh, backsliding Israel *&c. I will heal thy backsliding, &c. But if you will not hear my Soul shall weep in secret, &c. Because the Lord's Flock is gone into Captivity,* Rev. 2. 5. Jer. 3. 12. Hosea 14. 4. Jer. 14. 17.

AND you who have tasted of the Power of an Endless Life, and were convinced of the precious immutable Truth of God, and had in measure received it in the love and obedience of it, and by it were in part set free from the bondage of sin and corruption, and redeemed out of the pollutions of the world, but now are apostatized from the Lord, and hath forsaken his precious Truth and People, and like *Demas*, embraced this present world again, and are turned like the Dog to his vomit, and like the Swine that were washed, to wallow in the mire again, and hath made shipwrack of Faith and a good Conscience, and hath proved treacherous both to God and his People, and hath denied the womb that bore you, and the breast that gave you suck, and hath turned from the Grace of God into wantonness, and done dispite to the Spirit of Truth, and hath trampled the Blood of the Covenant wherewith you were in measure sanctified, under your feet as an unholy thing, and hath slain the Just, and crucified the Righteous in your selves. Oh, poor, poor hearts, my Soul pities you, and mourns in secret over you, and cannot but lament the sadness and deplorableness of your conditions; oh, better you had never known the Truth, then after you have known it to turn from it to your old Lovers again: oh, whither will you go, you Back-

sliding

sliding ones, where and in what will you hide your selves from the Lord, now you are departed from him? if you go from Sea to Sea he will find you out: and what can defend you from his wrath? oh, where, and in what can you find true peace, rest and happiness for your Souls, seeing you have forsaken him in whom alone it is to be enjoyed? Oh, are you not sensible that you want true peace? Oh, you that have forsaken the Fathers House of plenty, and are gone out among the Swine who feeds upon the Husks; oh, poor hearts, do you not sometimes a little come to your selves, and then remember the Fathers House? and do you not then find some inclination and desire to return again? if you do return, how know you but that he will have compassion on you, and receive you into his House again? though you have been spending your Portion among Harlots, and have dealt so treacherously by him, and so much wounded and grieved him, and his children; yet notwithstanding, if you can throughly return unto him with your whole hearts, he can and will receive you, and heal your backslidings, and blot out your sins, and forgive you your trangressions against him, and love you freely. Therefore return, return you backsliding ones, why, why will you die and perish for ever; oh, repent and do the first works, turn your minds inward to the pure and just One in your selves, which you have grieved, wounded and oppressed, as a Cart that is oppressed with Sheaves: Oh, that you might look upon him whom you have pierced, and behold him whom you have wounded; and even mourn and lament over him: Oh, to the pure, holy, faithful Witness of God in your own Consciences, which you were at first turned unto you must come, and the righteous Judgment of the Lord you must own, and wait in; yea, a dreadfull Cup you must drink before you can enjoy true lasting peace in God: oh, that you could be willing to drink it, and to pass again through the Fire and Sword, yea, through Death, to come to eat again of the Tree of Life, and live for ever: oh, that all you that are betrayed (like *Sampson*) of their strength by the Adulterous mind, so as that the *Philistine*, the uncircumcised nature hath prevailed over you, and put out your eyes, that you are become blind, and cannot see that beauty and comliness in the Lord and his Truth, which you once saw; oh, that the Lord would be pleased to visit you again, that (like as the hair of *Sampson* grew

again,

again, his strength increased; so that he slew more of his Enemies at his death, then he did in all his life) so the Seed of God may be raised again in your hearts; and the strength therein and thereby may be renewed and grow, that by your dying again unto that which is contrary to the will of God, you may witness greater victory in the Lord over your Enemies; and know more of them slain then ever you did. Oh, you that find, and are sensible that the Lord hath not wholly given you over; but is yet striving with you by his pure Witness in you to return unto him, his Truth and People again; oh, return before it be too late, and before the door of Mercy be for ever shut against you; for then if you seek the Blessing with tears, as *Esau* did, you will not obtain it; and though you call, *Lord, Lord open unto us, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and in thy Name we have cast out Devils, and have had power over unclean spirits, and have done many great works*; yet notwithstanding he will say, *Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity, I know you not*: therefore be sober and serious, and ponderously, consider, and let these things take deep Impression in your hearts, which are wrot in true love, pity and bowels of Compassion to your Immortal Souls, by a Mourner over you, and a Traveller in Spirit for your Restoration.

To those that profess Truth, and yet walk contrary to Truth in Life and Conversation.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now I tell you weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, &c. Phil. 3, 18, 19.

AAd all you who make a Profession of the Light and Truth in words, but in works deny it, whose Conversations are loose and vain and not consistant with your Profession, nor answerable, but repugnant to Truth, you do not conduce to the honour of Truth, but produce a dishonour thereunto by your loose diforderly walking, whereby you also give the Enemies of Truth advantage against the Truth for them to reproach the Truth, and those that walk and live in the Truth, and also you are a stumbling block in

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the way of the ſimple-hearted that hath a love and deſire towards Truth, and a grief and burthen to the Faithfull that love the Truth, and live in it, and ſeek the glory and honour thereof; and alſo you deceive your own Souls, by being ſatisfied with a profeſſion of Truth, without the poſſeſſion thereof; and you have no true peace where you are, nor unity with the Lord, nor fellowſhip with his People; for the unity and fellowſhip of the Saints is in the Light and holy Life of God; and they that are out of the Light (though they profeſs it) are out of the unity of the Faith, and fellowſhip of the Sons of God, and ſuch are but gotten into the outward Court were the *Gentiles*, the uncircumciſed in heart can come; but bleſſed are all they that doth the will of God, and keep his Commandments, and hath right to the Tree of Life, and enter through the Gate into the City, where no unclean thing can come: So all you that profeſs Truth, and walk contrary to the Truth, come to be faithfull and obedient to the Truth, that in the Way of Truth and Righteouſneſs you may walk as becometh Truth, and that in the Light you may ſhine as Lights in your holy Lives, and blameleſs unſpotted Converſations, to the praiſe and glory of God, and to the peace, reſt, comfort and happineſs of your own Souls: verily no Hypocrite in Sion can be hid from the Lord, who giveth the Churches to know that it is he that ſearcheth the heart and tryeth the reins, who ſaith, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his work ſhall be.*

To all thoſe that are convinced of the Truth, but ſtill remain in the worlds wayes.

If you know thoſe things, happy are you if you do them: He that knoweth the Fathers Will, and doth it not, is worthy of many ſtripes, John 13. 17.

AND all you that are convinced of the Truth and Way of God, but doth not reſign up your hearts in obedience to walk therein, but ſtill remain in the broad way of the World, partaking with them of their Sins, Idolatry and falſe worſhip; and though

you

you see the vanity and evil thereof, yet (for by ends, and carnal self-interests, to save your selves from reproach and suffering) you joyn with them therein against the pure Witness of God in your own Consciences; and if you continue partaking with them of their Sins, how can you but expect also to pertake of their Plagues? except you haste out from among them, and embrace and receive the Truth in the love and obedience of it: Oh, Come out, come out from amongst them, and be you separated, and touch no more the unclean thing, that the Lord may receive you unto himself, and become your God, and you become his People: Oh, you that know the Fathers Will, and doth it not, are you not worthy of many stripes? Oh poor hearts shun not the Cross any longer, neither be ashamed of the reproach, nor ashamed of the Lord and his people before men; but give up your hearts to obey the Lord and his precious Truth, and take up the daily Cross, that crucifies unto the World and worldly things unto the Sin, wickedness, formal Worships, vain Custom, Ceremonies, Pride and Vanity thereof, and follow the Lamb in the narrow way of holiness; and be willing to suffer with Christ, and you shall reign with him; and love not your lives unto death, and you shall have a Crown of Life: Oh, how long hath the Lord been woing many of you day after day, if not year after year; and hath long waited (knocking at the door of your hearts) in his Grace, to be gracious unto you, who desireth not that you should perish in your Rebellion and disobedience: oh, that the sence of his Goodness, Mercy and Patient-forbearing towards you might overcome your hearts, and make you willing to resign up your selves to walk in the way of Truth, before the Lord cease striving with you, (who hath said, *his Spirit shall not always strive with man*) lest the day of your visitation pass over your heads: Therefore come forward you that halt and linger behind in the Borders of *Babylon*, and Suburbs of *Egypt*; and come nigh you that stand afar off gazing to see what will become of us; *He that is not with me*, (said Christ) *is against me, he that gathereth not with me scatereth abroad*; *none can serve* (two Masters) *God and Mammon*.

To those that are newly Convinced of the Truth.

Ye were like Sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls: He shall gather his Lambs in his Arms, and carry them in his Bosom, 1 Peter 2. 25. Isaiah 40. 11.

AND all you who are newly convinced of the precious Truth and way of God, and hath in measure received Truth in the love and belief of it, and hath, and daily do give up your hearts to obey the Truth, and to walk in the Way of Righteousness, and Path of Holiness: dear ones, unto you my heart is open in the tender bowels of my heavenly Fathers Love; and happy and blessed of the Lord God are you if you do not faint, nor grow weary in your minds, nor turn back again, as some hath done, but persevere on to the end. Oh, dear Babes whom the Lord, mighty in power, hath by his out-stretched arm brought out of *Egypt*, the Land of Darkness, and House of Bondage, and hath set your faces towards *Canaan*, the good Land of Liberty, Light, Rest and Peace: Oh, travel on, travel on ye weak ones in the strength of the Lord, and drawings of his Light, and look not back to *Egypt* again, remember *Lot's* wife; and fear not (the god of the World, the Prince of the power of the airy mind, even that wicked spirit that once had dominion in and over you, and kept you bond-slaves in darkness to sin and corruption) though he (the Enemy of your Souls Liberty, Peace and Rest) may pursue hard after you with his whole Host of Temptations, Snares and Allurements, both inward and outward; and also a Sea of Trouble, Straits, Difficulties & Sufferings may appear in your way, both within and without, and Mountains of Fears, Doubts, and carnal Reasonings on every side; and also something in you ready to murmur, complain and say, oh, that we had tarried still in *Egypt*, and not set one step towards *Canaan*, for the Way is so strait, and the Path so narrow, the Sufferings

ings so hard, and the Difficulties and dangers so great, and various, that we fear we shall perish by the way, and not get to our desired Rest: therefore let us turn back again, before we go any further; oh, fear not, neither turn back; but stand still from reasoning carnally; and look not at the Straits, Trials, Dangers, Sufferings and losses that may appear before you; neither look at your own weakness, feebleness and inability, nor at the strength and temptations of your Enemy; but look up (ye little ones) unto the Lord, and trust you in the strength of his arm; for he is God all-sufficient for you; therefore cast your care upon him, and he will make a way for you through the Sea, and divide the waters of the great Deep, and make a way for you in the Wilderness, and a path through the Thickets, and make the crooked strait before you, and the rough smooth; he will throw down the Mountains, and remove away the Hills, and lead you in a way you know not, and in a path you never before trod in, and will make the hard things easie unto the willing and obedient, that turneth not back again to their old Lovers, but love Truth and Righteousness, and follow on to know the Lord in his Way; all such he will give to drink of the Brook by the way, and feed with Bread from Heaven, whereby you shall be refreshed, and your strength renewed daily, in which strength you shall be able to travel on without fainting, and to run and not be weary until you come to your desired rest, and see the travel of your Souls, and be satisfied with the enjoyment of that you have travelled after: So the Lord be with you, and keep your eye single unto himself, that your hearts may be full of Light, that nothing may cause you to stumble and fall into the snares of the Enemy, who hath hindred many that once begun to run well; oh, mind, and keep to that in your own hearts which makes you truely sensible of your particular states and conditions, and in that sence daily wait upon the Lord diligently, and patiently for the sweet refreshings from his presence, and for the distillings of his Heavenly dew, that so the tender plants of Righteousness, and lily of holiness may grow and spring in all your hearts; that the little Seed of Life may become as a great tree, and every one of you may witness a siting under your own Vine (Christ in you the hope of glory) and none to make you afraid.

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And dear Friends, look not out at others, but keep at home, in the Light, the Tent, *Jacob* shall dwell alone, and not be numbred among the Nations; *Esau* he hunts abroad, and grows weary and faint, and then sells his birth-right for a Mess of Pottage; what if some stumble and fall from the Truth? let not that shake you; Truth is the same still, and changeth not; and if you see some turn aside from us into a self-separation from the Body of Friends, and endeavour to draw Disciples after them, let not that cause you to stumble and question the certainty of Truth; neither be you drawn away, and toss't about like children by them; but keep to the Light, and in it follow the footsteps of the Flock; but follow not the footsteps of the wandering Sheep, that hath left the Flock, and are gone astray, who are like to perish by the devouring Beast and Enemy of their Souls, except in time they return again to the Fold; and if you see some (amongst our selves) setting, or keeping up that thing or practice which is out of the comly, desent Order of the Body, and not consistant with Truth's Government, let not that beget an occasion of stumbling in your minds; but be still, and keep your eye single to the Lord, and walk as you have them for an Example (that are over you in the Lord) who fully follow Christ Jesus; and as for that which is only set up and held up by man, out of Truth's Order, it will die and pass away, and Truth will out-live all. So unto the Lord that hath called you out of Darkness, to walk in his marvellous Light, do I commit you to be preserved unto himself unto the end; *For many are called, but few chosen; he that abides to the end, the same shall be saved.*

To the true Mourner in *Sion.*

To appoint to them that mourn in Sion, *and to give them the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, &c. Blessed are you that mourn, for you shall be comforted. They that soweth in Tears shall reap in Joy, &c.* Isa. 61. 12. Matth. 5. 4. Psal. 126. 5, 6.

OH, lift up thy head thou bowed down, thou Mourner in *Sion*, who are as one alone in a solitary place, and few seeth thee, or know-

knoweth thy sorrow or truely sensible of thy grief, or behold thy tears, who art (in thine own eye) as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, as a wife of youth rejected, who appears in thy own eyes as it were miserable and wretched, mourning in the sence of thy own (as thou thinkst) unworthiness, failings, inabillity, emptiness and poverty, who art ready to say, (with sorrow) Where is there any so poor, empty, barren and unfruitfull to God as I: Oh I can do nothing for the Lord except (like *Mary*) weep behind him (thinking my self scarce worthy to see his face) and wash his feet with my tears, whilst others sit at the table with him, and eat of the fatness of his house, and drinketh of the new wine of his Kingdom; but alass for me, my tears are my meat and drink, because of the oppression of my Enemy who saith to my soul, Where is thy God? doest thou think thou shalt ever be worthy to behold his Face, to receive his Love, and to have the Smiles of his Countenance. And thou (O mourning one) by hearkning to, and believing thy Enemy, becometh (in thy own eye) like an alone Sparow upon the house-top; and as the alone Quayl in the Stubble-field; and as a Dove alone, mourning for the loss of her Mate; and so thou layeth thee down in Sorrow, and makest it thy Bed, and Grief thy Sheets, Tears thy Pillow, and Sighing and Mourning thy sleep, whilst thou believest thy Enemy, and entertainest those fears, doubtings and carnal reasonings (which he infuseth into thy heart) as thy Companion: But arise I say unto thee, in the Name of my God, and thy God, of my Father, and thy Father) arise out of thy Bed, for thy Beloved is at hand, and knocketh at the door of thy heart; arise out of thy Bed of Sorrow, Fears and Doubtings, and by Faith let in him whom thy Soul loveth; say nor, I am not worthy of him, but rather say, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief, strengthen my Faith, make me more worthy of thee*: Oh, shut him out no longer by unbelief and doubtings and by reasoning with, and hearkning unto the Enemy of thy Soul's joy, peace and comfort, who would always keep thee from thy Beloved, and would daily add Sorrow to thy Sorrow, and Affliction to thy Grief, and Weight to thy Burthen, that he might (if he could) wholly sink thee down into the Pit of despairation for ever: wherefore hearken no longer unto him, for he was a Lyar from the beginning; entertain him not, nor his false instigations any longer (nor by unbelief keep not him out any longer

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whom thou loveſt and much deſireſt) but [illegible] that ſmall meaſure of Faith thou ſometimes feelſt in God, though it be but as a Grain of Muſtard ſeed, endeavour to thruſt and keep out thy Enemy, and to remove the Mountains of Fears and Doubtings out of thy way, and by Faith embrace him whom thy Soul deſires more then Rubies, or much fine Gold; that ſo the nights of thy Sorrow and Mourning for him in thy Bed of Fears and Doubtings may be turned into ſweet repoſes with him in his Bed of ſolace, that thou may ſay with gladneſs of heart, the falſe Accuſer is caſt out, and my Beloved is come, is come, and his reward is with him; he hath taken me from my mourning ſtate into his Banqueting-houſe of Joy, Peace, Reſt, and true ſatisfaction, and his Banner over me is Love; and now my ſorrow is turned into joy; and I that once ſat mourning in the Pit of doubtings and unbelief, hath the Lord (upon the wings of Faith) raiſed up to come to ſing in the height of *Sion*, and to ſhow to the goodneſs of my God, who hath exalted my horn in him, and enlarged my mouth over my Enemy, whoſe mouth was enlarged over me in the day I bowed under him through unbelief and doubtings: oh, then feebleneſs poſſeſſed my loyns, weakneſs my knees, and faintneſs my heart; ſo that when I roſe up to go (towards my Beloved) I fell by doubtings and fears; but now, I that ſtumbled am (by Faith in the Power of my God) girt with ſtrength, and the Bow of the mighty man (that prevailed againſt me) is broken in pieces, who ſo often wounded me with his darts, that I was like to poor *Lazarus*, full of wounds, bruiſes and ſores; but the Great Phyſitian of Souls hath healed me with the Oyl of Faith and Salvation; and now I find that it is the Lord that bindeth up the broken in heart, and healeth all their wounds: oh, bleſſed be the Lord who hath exalted my low eſtate, and brought me from off the Dunghil, and given me a Manſion in the Fathers Houſe, and a place at the Table with his Children; though I once, by hearken to my Enemy, ſaid, I was a Dog, and not worthy to eat of the childrens bread; and ſo I kept good things from me by yeilding to my Adverſary, who would ſtill haye fed me with his food, even the duſt of the Earth, that ſo I might have continued always weak, lean, barren and feeble, and never to have been able to overcome him; but the Lord my tender God (who thought upon me in the day of my diſtreſs, when I was poor and needy) hath rebuked him, and hath put him under my feet,

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the mighty the Lord hath brought down form his Seat, and exalted him of low degree, he hath delivered *Jacob* out of the hand of him that was too ſtrong for him, and though he was a worm, and no man, and the cry was, *How ſhall Jacob ariſe*, yet the Arm of his God hath raiſed him from the Earth, and hath ſet his feet upon the necks of his Enemies, and hath given him power to tread upon the mighty, as the Potter treadeth Clay; and *this is the Lords doings, and it is marvelous in the eyes of his Servants, bleſſed be his Name for ever, it is the Lord that lifteth up the weak hands that hung down, and ſtrengthens the feeble knees, and make ſtrait their paths, that that which is lame may not be turned out of the way, but that rather it may be healed; that the halting may go upright, and the lame may leap as an Hart, and the tongue of the dumb might ſing of the goodneſs of the Lord, and the Mourner rejoyce in him whoſe Mercy endureth for ever.* So believe, hope and truſt you in the Lord all ye that love him, and mourn and long for him, and in patience and contentedneſs (without fainting in your minds) wait for him; for the Lord is good to man that waiteth upon him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him; and it is good both to hope and quietly to wait upon the Lord more then he that wanteth and waiteth for the morning; for with the Lord there is great mercy and plentious redemption, who redeemeth *Jacob* out of all his trouble, and is with him in the fire, and in the water, and in all his afflictions he forſook him not: therefore truſt you, hope, rely and depend you upon the Lord all you that love him, and caſt your care upon him, for he careth for you, whoſe tender compaſſion and faithfulneſs will never fail to the Houſe of *Iſrael*.

A General Salutation of Love to the children of Light.

AND all dearly beloved Friends every where, who are faithful to the Lord and his Truth in your ſeveral meaſures and places, my very dear & unfained love in the precious Truth of our God extends unto all the honeſt and upright in heart, who loveth and delighteth in Truth and Righteouſneſs, and ſeeketh the praiſe honour and glory of God alone, grace and love be with you, mercy and peace attend you, joy and comfort fill you, and the bleſſing of the Moſt High reſt upon, and remain in and with you day and night, and the Lord keep you all in the Faith of the Elect Seed, in which is your victory over the world, in which ſtand faſt, and keep your dominion in the Lord, over

the Earth and earthly things, that the Earth may be the footstool of your minds, and Heaven your Throne, and you to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and to use the world as if you used it not, being loose in heart to that which perish with the using; oh, that all Friends that are free from, and void of the cares of this life, and combrances of this world may prize (and stand fast in) their freedom, and not be forward and hasty (in the affectionate part) to run their selves into bondage to those things that profit not, but hindreth to God-ward, and prove as briers & thorns to the choaking or quenching of the growth of the Seed of Life in the heart; there is a mind that hunts and desires after (and is ready (if it be not limitted) to form and create unto it self) a freedom that standeth not in the liberty of the Sons of God; the liberty of Sons of God, and Children of the Light stand in that which is a yoke to the worlds liberty, and their freedom stands in that which is bondage to the carnal mind, and crucifieth unto the world and worldly things; also there is a mind that is ready to endeavor and seek to put off, and to keep out of those things (which in their proper place may be said to be lawful) that it seeth it hindreth the growth into the Eternal, and endangereth the Souls standing to God-ward; and truly that is the more purer mind that serves (one Master) God alone; and indeed, dear Friends, I am ready to desire that this mind (which was in Christ Jesus) may have dominion in our hearts more and more; that as Strangers and Pilgrims we may be in and to the world, and the love thereof, and the Lord alone become the object of our love, and his Truth the covering of our eyes, that so the desire of our Souls may be unto him, and unto the remembrance of his Name, which is like precious oyntment pour'd forth, giving a pleasant smell, and a sweet delectable savour, and therefore doth the Virgins love him, and remember his Love more then wine; yea, more then Father, Mother, Husband, Wife, Children, Silver, Gold, Houses, Lands; yea, he is the chiefest to them of ten thousand, and the upright loveth him, for he is altogether comly.

Oh, dearly beloved Friends, much hath the Lord God of power done for us, since the day he found us laid among the pits, and raised us up from the Dunghil of our own corruption, and said unto us, live, who were dead in sins and trespasses: oh, how greatly hath he blessed and prospered us in dispite of that spirit that hath so eagerly sought and endeavoured to devour us, and extinguish us from being a people;

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and hath even made us a Family like a Flock, and though *Balack* and *Balaam*'s ſpirit (the Beaſt *Jezabel* and falſe Prophets) hath ſought inchantments againſt us, to curſe us; yet the God of bleſſings hath greatly bleſſed us in our Sufferings, Tribulations and Afflictions, and hath made *Joſeph* as a fruitful Bough by the wall, whoſe Branches grows over the wall, (that doth and will let until it be taken out of the way) though the Archers of *Babilon* hath ſhot at him, and grievouſly wounded him, yet his Bow (notwithſtanding his great Affliction) hath abode in ſtrength, and the hands of his arms hath been made ſtrong by the hand of the mighty God of *Jacob*, who hath bleſſed *Joſeph*, and unto the uttermoſt bounds of the Everlaſting Hills ſhall he be bleſſed for evermore.

Oh, dear Friends, if any People now in being upon the Earth hath cauſe to ſpeak well of the Lord, and to truſt in his holy Name, we are the People; for mightily and wonderfully hath the mighty God done and wrought for us, though the blind world ſee it not: oh, how have we been as Lambs among Lions, and yet not devoured, but wonderfully preſerved by the ſecret Power and inviſible Arm of the Lord our Shepherd; who hath been our defence, when the Beaſts of the Forreſt hath come forth to devour, and the Wolves hath been greedy of their prey, then hath the Lord fought for *Mount-Sion*, and defended the Hill thereof; and though ſome ſaid, We'll perſue, we'll overtake, our luſt ſhall be ſatisfied on them; we'll draw our Swords, and our hands ſhall deſtroy them; yet how hath the Lord blown in his wrath upon them, and the Sea of his Judgment hath covered them, and they are ſunk as Lead in the bottom of the mighty Waters, and we yet (through mercy) are alive, and have a being among the Living, to ſpeak well of the Lord, and to make mention of the goodneſs of our God and to declare of his kindneſs, and to praiſe him for his works, which are mavellous in our eyes: oh, his Love, his Mercy, and tender Fatherly care over, and towards us extends beyond the demonſtration of words: and oh, let the ſence thereof be engraven upon the table of our hearts, that it may humble us and keep us low before the Lord, and be an obligation upon every Soul of us, to bind and engage us unto the Lord and his Truth for ever.

How mightily hath the Lord limitted and quietted the raging Sea, and made a calm? oh, that all Friends might take notice of the great Mercy and Love of the Lord to us in this particular, and mind the end of the Lord therein, and let us all take heed we ſin not, becauſe Grace and Mercy to us abounds, leſt it provoke the Lord to anger, and be a

moving cauſe to induce him to let forth the wind, and ſuffer a Storm again. Oh, that none might get into a falſe eaſe and liberty, and wrong ſecurity, becauſe of the preſent calm; but all to keep retire in that which fitteth and maketh ready for trials when they come, in, by and through which we have been upheld and preſerved hitherto, even by the ſecret Power and Arm of the Lord, which is not ſhortned that it cannot ſave, but is the ſame that ever it was, and it hath been our Helper in ſix troubles, and in the ſeventh hath not been wanting to us to help us when there hath been none to help, and to ſupport and uphold us when there hath been none to uphold, but Loads, Burthens and Oppreſſions hath been heaped upon us, and to comfort us, when nothing but ſorrow and trouble from the world compaſſed us about, and when we have had nothing as from men but the bread of Adverſity, and the water of Affliction; even then hath the Lord our tender God been the Comforter of our hearts, the Refreſher of our ſouls, and the Rejoycer of our ſpirits, and the Lifter up of our hands; when we have been bowed down with the Oppreſſions of our Enemies his Preſence hath been with us in the Priſon-houſe, and in the low Dungeon, and hath not left us to this day, and aſſuredly never, never, never will leave us, if we leave not him, but will be with us until we have finiſhed our courſe, and fulfilled the days of our appointed time, and our change come.

So dear Friends, unto the Lord I commit you, who knoweth how it is with all his Babes and Children, and beholdeth all their trials, ſtraits and ſufferings, inward and outward, and his ear is open to the cry of the poor, and groanings of the needy, who is God all-ſufficient for all thoſe that truſt, hope, rely and depend upon him, and able to keep them by his power through faith in his Name, unto his heavenly Kingdom: So the Lord be with you all, and the Almighty protect and defend you, and keep you from evil, unſpotted from the World, and preſerve you in Love, Peace and Unity with himſelf, and one with another in his innocent unfained Love, in his Light, Life, Power and Truth, and make and keep you all of one heart, and one mind, and one ſoul; that you all with one conſent may ſtill worſhip and ſerve the Lord God in the one Spirit, and the one Truth, in which I dearly greet, ſalute and embrace you all, and remain your Friend and Companion in the patience and tribulation of Jeſus; Farewel dear Friends.

Written in Edmonds-Bury *Common-Goal, the* 11*th Moneth*, 1667. *William Bennitt.*